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Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 MEXICO 15381 070135Z
73
ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
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AID-05 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /069 W
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R 070030Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9048
INFO ALL US CONSULATES MEXICO VIA POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 15381

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT MX
SUBJECT: JLP: HOW IS HE DOING?

1. FIRST FIVE DAYS OF LOPEZ PORTILLO'S ADMINISTRATION HAVE BEEN BUSY AND VIGOROUS. NEW SECRETARIES HAVE BEEN NAMING THEIR STAFFS. POLITICAL PARTIES OUTSIDE PRI HAVE BEEN MAKING SYMPATHETIC AND UNDERSTANDING VERBAL GESTURES, INCLUDING STATING THAT THEY DO NOT LOOK AT THEMSELVES AS "IN OPPOSITION". SECRETARY OF FINANCE AND PRESIDENT HIMSELF HAVE MET WITH LEADING US AND OTHER FOREIGN BUSINESSMEN TO ASSURE THEM THAT MEXICO NEEDS THEIR FINANICIAL ASSISTANCE FOR INVESTMENT AND WILL TREAT THEM FAIRLY AND IN STRICT CONFORMITY WITH MEXICAN CONSTITUTION AND LAWS. IN SWEARING IN NEW CABINET OFFICIALS, PRESIDENT MADE CLEAR THAT HE EXPECTED SCRUPULOUS HONESTY AND COMPLETE SERVICE TO THEIR PUBLIC RESPONSIBILITIES. SPEAKING THROUGH INTERMEDIARY OF HIS PRIVATE SECRETARY, ENRIQUE VELASCO IBARRA, HE MADE CLEAR THAT IF THEY CARRIED OUT THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES AS DIRECTED, THEY WOULD BE REWARDED, BUT IF THEY DID NOT, THEY WOULD BE HELD TO ACCOUNT. IN BRIEF, IT APPEARS THAT GOOD GROUNDWORK HAS BEEN LAID FOR RESTORATION OF CONFIDENCE THAT WAS PRINCIPAL THEME OF JLP'S INAUGURAL MESSAGE.

2. EUPHORIA OF INAUGURAL PERIOD HAS CERTAINLY BEEN INFLUENCED BY GLAMOUR SURROUDGING INAUGURATION ITSELF: ATTENDANCE OF WORLD LEADERS LIKE FANFANI AND CARLOS ROMULO, AND, ABOVE ALL, PRESENCE OF HIGH-LEVEL US DEL HEADED BY SECRETARY AND MRS. CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MEXICO 15381 070135Z

KISSINGER, SON OF INCUMBENT US PRESIDENT, SEN. MIKE MANSFIELD

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

AND UNDERSECY ROGERS AND ASST SECY SHLAUDEMAN, WHICH PROVED IMPORTANCE TO US OF MEXICO'S CHANGE OF RULING TEAM. ATTENDANCE OF MRS. ROSALYNN CARTER WAS STRONG BOOST TO MEXICO'S FEELING OF IMPORTANCE, AS WAS PRESENCE OF LARGE NUMBERS OF US BUSINESS-MEN, BANKING AND INDUSTRIAL LEADERS. PRESS COVERAGE (E.G. IN-DEPTH TREATMENT OF INAUGURATION AND OF MEXICAN DEVELOPMENTS BY NEWSPAPERS LIKE NEW YORK TIMES, WASHINGTON POST AND STAR, WALL STREET JOURNAL AND BY TIME AND NEWSWEEK) WAS SHOT IN ARM TO MEXICO'S PRIDE AND HELPTED TO BUILD SPIRIT OF SELF-CONFIDENCE AND SELF-IMPORTANCE THAT WAS ABSENT IN WANING MONTHS OF ECHEVERRIA ADMINISTRATION.

3. IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT IT IS TOO SOON TO SAY HOW LONG AND TO WHAT DEGREE HONEYMOON WILL CONTINUE. FOR ONE THING, ALTHOUGH LOPEZ PORTILLO SAID THAT HE WAS NOT MIRACLE WORKER AND EMPHASIZED MANY TIMES THAT HE WAS GOING TO NEED TIME AND THE COOPERATION OF ALL, EXPECTATIONS OF HIS ABILITY TO RESTRUCTURE AND REFORM WERE PRETERNATUALLY HIGH. THERE IS BOUND TO BE SOME DISILLUSIONMENT WHEN HE DOES NOT PERFORM MIRACLES AND WHEN THE PROGRAMS ON WHICH HE IS WORKING BEGIN TO AFFECT THE VITAL INTERESTS OF SOME OF THOSE, WHETHER ON THE SIDE OF LABOR OR OF BUSINESS, WHO MAY NOT YET HAVE CALCULATED HOW HIS PROGRAMS WILL IMPINGE ON THEM PERSONALLY OR AS A GROUP.

4. THE QUESTION IS, HOW LONG IS THE ATMOSPHERE OF "GOOD FEELINGS" LIKELY TO ENDURE. THE ANSWER WILL DEPEND ON WHETHER THOSE WHO ANALYZE THE EVENTS THAT ARE NOW BEGINNING TO TAKE PLACE CONCLUDE THAT THE CHANGES ARE SHADOW OR SUBSTANCE; ON WHETHER, FOR INSTANCE, THEY PERCEIVE THAT THE NEW LEADERS WHOM LOPEZ PORTILLO IS NOW APPOINTING ARE REALLY MEN OF THE CALIBER HE HAS PROMISED, OR WHETHER THEY ARE JUDGED TO BE "MORE OF THE SAME". THE CASE OF ARTURO DURAZO, MEXICO CITY POLICE CHIEF (REPORTED SEPTEL) IS A CASE IN POINT. (MEXICANS ARE TOO SOPHISTICATED TO BELIEVE THAT ABSOLUTE HONESTY AND TOTAL RE-NUNCIATION OF PERSONAL GAIN AND ADVANTAGE WILL CHARACTERIZE THE INCOMING ADMINISTRATION, BUT THEY WILL EXPECT TO SEE RELATIVE IMPROVEMENT.) IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT, AS FAR AS THE CONTINUATION OF PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IS CONCERNED, IT WILL CONTINUE UNTIL EARLY IN THE NEXT YEAR, WHEN CHRISTMAS VACTIONS END, PEOPLE ONCE AGAIN GET DOWN TO SERIOUS WORK, AND
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OPINION LEADERS HAVE A CHANCE TO SURVEY THE STATE OF THINGS AS THEY HAVE DEVELOPED DURING THE FIRST MONTH. THE JURY IS WELL DISPOSED TO THE PLAINTIFF, BUT NOT ALL THE EVIDENCE IS IN.
JOVA

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

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